

Message Text

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TO USICA WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4406

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: BILATERAL COMMUNICATION RELATIONSHIP AND PROJECT
PROPOSALS: SWAZILAND

REF: STATE 057880

8. COMMUNICATION RELATIONSHIP

A. CONSIDERABLE GOODWILL EXISTS IN SWAZILAND FOR AMERICANS AND THINGS AMERICAN. THIS RESULTS FROM SWAZIS' EXPOSURE TO PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER AMERICANS, WHOSE OPEN, CAN-DO APPROACH THEY APPRECIATE, AND FROM THEIR ADMIRATION OF THE AMERICAN LIFESTYLE (INCLUDING MUSIC) AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS CONDUCTED BY OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS FAVORABLE IMPRESSION.

B. TWO US-SWAZILAND COMMUNICATION STRENGTHS ARE CONSTANTLY GROWING: (1) A RELATIVELY LARGE NUMBER OF SWAZI STUDENTS ARE SENT TO THE UNITED STATES FOR STUDY. ALTHOUGH SMALL IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS, THESE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE AMONG THE FUTURE
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LEADERS OF SWAZI SOCIETY AND THEY INVARIABLY RETURN WITH A POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE UNITED STATES. (2) AN INCREASING NUMBER OF SWAZI LEADERS AND POTENTIAL LEADERS HAVE TRAVELED TO THE UNITED STATES ON OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE AMERICAN GRANT PROGRAMS. THIS EXPERIENCE HAS OPENED NEW AVENUES OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TRAVELERS AND THE MISSION, AS WELL AS BETWEEN THE TRAVELERS AND INDIVIDUAL AMERICANS WHOM THEY MET IN THE COURSE OF THEIR

VISITS.

C. WEAKNESSES IN US-SWAZILAND COMMUNICATION INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

(1) BECAUSE OF THE STRONGLY BRITISH ORIENTATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE IS TAUGHT OR WIDELY KNOWN ABOUT THE UNITED STATES. (2) THE PEACE CORPS IMAGE IS BECOMING A MIXED PERCEPTION. THE DRIVE FOR "LOCALIZATION" OF JOBS IS GROWING; PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS, WHO OFTEN FILL TEACHING JOBS AND LOWER-LEVEL TECHNICAL POSTS, ARE SOMETIMES VIEWED AS "TAKING" JOBS FROM SWAZIS. (3) THE UNITED STATES, REGARDED AS A SUPER-POWER ABLE TO OPERATE WITHOUT CONSTRAINTS, IS CRITICIZED, GENERALLY BY THE OLDER GENERATION, FOR FAILING TO BLOCK COMMUNIST INITIATIVES IN AFRICA AND, MORE BY THE YOUNGER PEOPLE, FOR ALLOWING AMERICAN INVESTMENT AND TRADE WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND FOR FAILING TO SUPPORT BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN THAT COUNTRY, WITH WHICH SWAZILAND SHARES CLOSE CULTURAL AND KINSHIP TIES. (4) AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE SWAZILAND GOVERNMENT THERE IS MILD RESENTMENT OVER THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S FOCUS ON THE LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION, ESPECIALLY ON DETENTIONS.

D. AT PRESENT -- AND IT COULD CHANGE RAPIDLY -- SSWAZILAND IS A RELATIVELY OPEN AND FREE SOCIETY. THE MISSION, IDENTIFIED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF SWAZILAND THROUGH ITS AID, PEACE CORPS, AND SELF-HELP PROGRAMS, IS IN AN EXCELLENT POSITION TO EXPAND ITS ALREADY EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE WITH SWAZIS.

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E. AS THE COUNTRY MOVES CLOSER TO THE DAY OF THE DEMISE OF THE 78-YEAR-OLD KING SOBHUZA, AND TO THE BEGINNING OF THE TRANSITION ERA, THE DIALOGUE WILL NEED TO BE BROADENED WITH SWAZIS WHO ARE COMMITTED TO MODERNIZING THE GOVERNMENT AND CULTURE AFTER SOBHUZA'S DEATH. THESE PEOPLE ARE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE BUREAUCRACY, POLICE, SCHOOLS, AND WORKING CLASS. ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY FEW IN NUMBER, AND CURRENTLY EXCLUDED FROM TOP DECISION-MAKING POSTS, THEY ARE THE PEOPLE THE MISSION MUST REACH IF IT IS TO CONTRIBUTE TO A STABLE, PROGRESSIVE POST-SOBHUZA ERA.

F. THE MISSION SHOULD SEEK TO DEVELOP AN APPRECIATION FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S ROLE WITH RESPECT TO COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA AND TO PROMOTE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES CONCERNING SOUTH AFRICA. ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, THE MISSION SHOULD DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTENTION REFLECTS A BROAD DOMESTIC CONSENSUS THAT SHOULD BE SEEN NOT AS A THREAT TO SWAZI SOCIETY BUT RATHER AS A CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING EFFORT VALID IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

G. SWAZIS ARE A HIGHLY ETHNOCENTRIC AND TRADITIONALIST PEOPLE. ICA PROGRAMS, COMPLEMENTING AND SUPPLEMENTING THOSE OF OTHER

OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS, SHOULD ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN SWAZILAND AND TO INFLUENCE FAVORABLY THE SWAZIS' PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD.

II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN ACHIEVING USG GOALS IN THE COMMUNICATION AREA WILL BE THE ASSIGNMENT OF A PAO IN MBABANE. THE POST, AND THE AMBASSADOR PERSONALLY, HAVE BROUGHT THIS NEED TO THE ATTENTION OF THE DEPARTMENT AND USIA/USICA. AS WASHINGTON IS AWARE, MBABANE'S CREATIVE AND PRODUCTIVE USICA ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE ONLY BECAUSE THE POST'S TWO SUBSTANTIVE OFFICERS HAVE DIVERTED SUBSTANTIAL EFFORTS AWAY FROM PRESSING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ASSIGNMENTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EXCELLENT PROGRAM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPPORTUNITIES HERE. THIS CANNOT CONTINUE ANY LONGER, WHICH MEANS THAT THE POST'S ATTEMPTS TO REDUCE COMMUNICATIONS TENSIONS WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED UNLESS A PAO ARRIVES TO TAKE ON USICA TASKS. THE POST REQUESTS THAT USICA GIVE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO THIS ASSIGNMENT.

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III. PROJECT PROPOSALS

A. THEMATIC

1. AS NOTED IN THE FOREGOING ESSAY, THERE ARE FEW COMMUNICATION TENSION ISSUES IN US-SWAZILAND RELATIONS. HOWEVER, THE POST IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP AS THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE.

2. AS DISCUSSED AT LUSAKA PAO CONFERENCE, THE POST WOULD STRONGLY SUPPORT A SUB-REGIONAL PROJECT THAT EXPLAINS TO KEY SWAZILAND LEADERS USG POLICY, GOALS, AND METHODS, AS WELL AS LIMITATIONS. OUR PREFERRED PROJECT WOULD BE A SEMINAR-TYPE ARRANGEMENT WHERE USG PARTICIPANTS COULD LISTEN AS WELL AS EXPLAIN. THIS WOULD GO FAR TO REDUCING THE GOS FEELING OF POLITICAL ISOLATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

3. IT WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE IF ICA COULD ARRANGE FOR AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS TO BE PERSONS ABLE TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF USG, RATHER THAN ACADEMIC OR MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES. (IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO HAVE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THOSE SECTORS PRESENT TO EXPLAIN THE ROLE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE INSTITUTIONS.) THE SEMINARS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHOULD BE LIMITED TO RELATIVELY FEW PARTICIPANTS IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS.

4. THE SEMINAR WOULD PROBABALY HAVE TO BE IN TWO PARTS, WITH AT LEAST ONE SESSION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ANOTHER IN A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH SWAZILAND AND LESOTHO HAVE AVAILABLE FACILITIES, BOTSWANA MIGHT BE THE BEST VENUE. PARTICIPATING POSTS COULD NOMINATE THREE OR FOUR PERSONS TO REPRESENT THEIR HOST COUNTRY. IF POSSIBLE, ONE OR MORE OF THE US REPRESENTATIVES COULD VISIT THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES FOR COURTEST CALLS OR CULTURAL AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING. THE SEMINAR AND INTEREST SHOWN IN THE NEIGHBORING STATES SHOULD BE A CLEAR SIGNAL TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT THAT THE USG IS STRONGLY CONCERNED ABOUT FUTURE OF BLS COUNTRIES.

B. EXCHANGES

1. ACADEMIC
FULBRIGHT PROFESSOR IN HISTORY
FULBRIGHT PROFESSOR (UNSPECIFIED FIELD), TOP-UP

2. IV GRANTS
POLICE COMMISSIONER
SENIOR JUSTICE MINISTRY OFFICIAL
SEBENTA DIRECTOR
WOMAN IN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

3-MEMBER SWAZI NATIONAL COUNCIL GROUP
3 OPERATION CROSSROADS MID-LEVEL CIVIL SERVANTS

2 CIP WOMEN POLICE/PRISON OFFICERS

AAUW PARTICIPANT

1 US 4-H PARTICIPANT, 1 SWAZI 4-S PARTICIPANT

C. OTHER

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THE POST WILL CONTINUE TO ORDER MATERIALS (INCLUDING BOOKS,
FILMS, VTR'S, AND TAPES) THAT WILL HELP RPOMOTE ITS
COMMUNICATIONS GOALS.

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